



# The Outside of August (Ballantine Reader's Circle)

*Joanna Hershon*

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Critics and readers alike hailed *Swimming*, Joanna Hershon's fiction debut. "Compelling," said the *Washington Post*, while *Vanity Fair* called *Swimming* a "page-turning premiere." Now Hershon brings us her anticipated second novel, in which she vividly explores the secrets of an American family. *The Outside of August* is a mesmerizing, beautifully written story that combs the emotional landscape of its characters with power and precision.

For as long as Alice Green can remember, her elusive mother, Charlotte, has moved in and out of family life—disappearing relentlessly and often without explanation. Despite the exotic clutter of souvenirs that detail Charlotte's international travels, the Green's home becomes progressively hollow, as nothing but Charlotte can fill the empty spaces.

With their mother's tenuous presence, and their tender but distant father working long hours, Alice and her brother, August, react in different ways. While seeking constant affection from other women, August relies on an unspoken bond with Charlotte that allows him a certain freedom. But Alice feels no such security and grows increasingly unmoored, always in search of ways to keep her mother at home.

When, years later, her unfettered brother becomes strangely remote, Alice journeys to find him in an isolated beach town. It is there that a deeply buried secret will have to unravel in order for Alice to come to terms with her fractured family and her place within it—and learn to let go of a mother she perhaps never really knew.

BONUS: This edition includes an excerpt from Joanna Hershon's *A Dual Inheritance*.

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